

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS:

Claims 1 – 26 are currently pending in the application, with claims 1, 9, 16 and 24 being independent. Claims 1 – 26 have been rejected. No claims are amended and no new matter has been added to the claims.

Applicants have carefully considered the contents of the non-final Office Action and respectfully request reconsideration and reexamination of the subject application in view of the explanations noted below.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1 - 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,795,180 to Siebens (the Siebens '180 patent). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, since the Siebens '180 patent clearly does not disclose, teach or render obvious the subject matter of independent claims 1 and 9.

Independent claims 1 and 9 recite, inter alia, a plurality of radial indicator ribs that abut a portion of a mating electrical connector.

The Siebens '180 patent discloses a bushing insert 72' that includes an elbow seating band 100 (FIG. 4) disposed in a recess 114 of insert 72' (FIG. 3), which is shown assembled in FIG. 2. The elbow seating band 100 is formed of a brightly colored material. The bushing insert 72' is inserted into a mating electrical connector, such as elbow 30 shown in FIG. 1, until the brightly colored band 100 is no longer visible. A series of stop shoulders 110 extend outwardly from the insert 72' and are adapted to limit insertion of the insert 72' into an aperture in a mounting panel 70 (FIG. 1) and to make good electrical contact between the conductive jacket 102 and the grounded metal mounting panel. Col. 2, lines 55 – 60. The annular recess 84 and annular rib 82 of the insert 72' are adapted to engage corresponding ribs and recesses in the bore of the elbow 30. As shown in FIG. 1, the retaining rib 122 of the insert 72' is adapted to engage step surface 81 of the main body portion 73 of the elbow 30, such that the band 100 is no longer visible while leaving the stop shoulders 110 outside of the elbow 30 to engage the mounting panel 70. Thus, the stop shoulders 110 abut a panel 70 spaced from the mating electrical connector, not the cuff on a mating connector to limit insertion of the electrical connector as recited in independent claims 1 and 9.

The Siebens '180 patent does not disclose a plurality of indicator ribs having an abutment surface adapted to abut a portion of a mating electrical connector, as recited in independent claim 1 and 9. The stop shoulders 110 of the Siebens '180 patent engage the panel 70 (FIG. 1) to prevent further insertion of the insert 72', as well as making good electrical contact between the conductive jacket 102 and the grounded metal mounting panel. Col. 2, lines 55 – 60. Thus, the stop shoulders 110 do not *indicate* whether the insert 72' has been properly mated with the elbow 30, as recited in independent claims 1 and 9. Furthermore, the stop shoulders 110 do not *abut* a portion of the elbow 30, as recited in independent claims 1 and 9. The main objective of the Siebens' 180 patent is to provide an indicator band that shows correct assembly of the high voltage elbow to the insert by obfuscation of the indicator band and in which the indicator band does not degrade by multiple assembly and disassembly operations. Col. 1, lines 26 – 30. Thus, the Siebens '180 patent teaches away from an electrical connector having radially extending ribs that indicate proper electrical mating between connectors.

Furthermore, the indicator of the Siebens '180 patent is the seating band 100 that indicates proper mating between the insert 72' and the elbow 30 when it is no longer visible. Thus, rather than abutting the mating electrical connector as recited in independent claims 1 and 9, the Siebens '180 patent indicates proper mating by fully inserting the indicator band 100 *within* the elbow 30. There is no disclosure or suggestion of the indicating proper mating between the insert 72' and the elbow 30 of the Siebens '180 patent by abutting a plurality of radial indicator ribs with a portion of a mating electrical connector, as recited in independent claims 1 and 9.

Lacking several elements recited in independent claims 1 and 9, the Siebens '180 patent does not anticipate independent claims 1 and 9 since a "claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference." Verdegall Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of California, 814 F.2d 628, 631 (Fed. Cir. 1987). Therefore, the Siebens '180 patent does not anticipate or render obvious independent claims 1 and 9.

Claims 2 – 8 and 10 - 15, being dependent upon independent claims 1 and 9, are also allowable for the above reasons. Moreover, dependent claims 2 – 8 and 10 – 15 recite additional features further distinguishing them over the cited patent, such as the radial

indicator ribs being formed as a unitary one-piece member with the outer conductive jacket of claims 6 and 13; and a ground section is disposed on the mid-section spaced from each of the ribs for connecting the body to ground of claims 8 and 15. Therefore, dependent claims 2 – 8 and 10 - 15 are not anticipated or rendered obvious by the cited patent, particularly within the overall claimed combination.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 16 - 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Siebens '180 patent in view of the prior art shown in FIG. 1 of the Siebens '180 patent. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, since the Siebens '180 patent clearly does not disclose, teach or render obvious the subject matter of rejected claims 16 - 26.

Independent claims 16 and 24 recite, inter alia, a radial indicator rib being in close proximity with an end portion of a cuff of a mating electrical connector when mated.

As discussed above, the Siebens '180 patent does not disclose or suggest a radial indicator rib that functions as an indication of proper mating between first and second electrical connectors or that is in close proximity to the end portion of the cuff of the second electrical connector when the first and second electrical connectors are mated. As discussed above, the Siebens '180 patent teaches away from providing an electrical connector with ribs to indicate proper mating. Thus, the Siebens '180 patent does not disclose or suggest a radial indicator rib that is in close proximity to the end portion of the cuff of a mating electrical connector when mated.

Furthermore, the panel 70 through which the insert 72' is inserted to access the elbow 30 is alleged in the Office Action to be the recited cuff of the second electrical connector of independent claims 16 and 24. However, as clearly shown in FIG. 1, the panel 70 does not terminate the port in the second electrical connector, as recited in independent claims 16 and 24. The end portion 78 of the elbow is substantially spaced from the panel 70. There is no suggestion of motivation to modify the elbow 30 of the Siebens '180 patent to have the metal mounting panel 70 terminate the end portion 78 of the elbow.

Thus, the Siebens '180 patent does not disclose, teach or suggest a radially extending indicator rib that is in close proximity to the end portion of a cuff of a mating electrical connector when mated, as recited in independent claims 16 and 24.

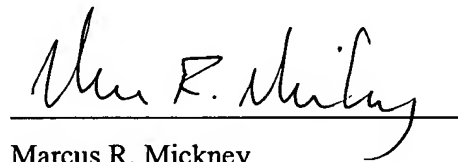
Application No. 10/721,823
Amendment dated October 13, 2005
Reply to Office Action of July 13, 2005

Claims 17 – 23 and 25 – 26, being dependent upon independent claims 16 and 24, respectively, are also allowable for the above reasons. Moreover, these dependent claims recite additional features further distinguishing them over the cited patents. For example, the cuff of the second electrical connector covers the step without covering the outer surface of the radial indicator rib of claim 20; a ground connection is disposed on the mid-section spaced from the rib to connect the first electrical connector to ground of claim 23; and abutting the surface of the cuff of the second electrical connector with abutment surfaces of a plurality of indicator ribs, respectively, extending from the outer surface of the mid-section of the first electrical connector and are laterally offset from the transition shoulder of the first electrical connector of claim 25, are not anticipated or rendered obvious by the cited patents, particularly within the overall claimed combination.

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In view of the foregoing explanations and comments, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1 – 26 are allowable over the cited patents. Prompt and favorable action is solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Marcus R. Mickney", is written over a horizontal line.

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Dated: OCTOBER 13, 2005